

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR VICTIMS OF DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE IN TAIWAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 297) expressing sympathy for the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck Taiwan on September 21, 1999, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 297

Whereas on the morning of September 21, 1999, a devastating and deadly earthquake shook the counties of Nantou and Taichung, Taiwan, killing more than 1,700 people, injuring more than 4,000, and leaving more than 100,000 homeless;

Whereas the earthquake of January 21, 1999, has left thousands of buildings in ruin, caused widespread fires, and destroyed highways and other infrastructure;

Whereas the strength, courage, and determination of the people of Taiwan has been displayed since the earthquake;

Whereas the people of the United States and Taiwan share strong friendship and mutual interests and respect;

Whereas the United States has offered whatever technical assistance might be needed and has dispatched the Urban Search and Rescue Team of Fairfax County, Virginia; and

Whereas offers of assistance have come from the Governments of Japan, Singapore, the People's Republic of China, Turkey, and others: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its deepest sympathies to the citizens of Nantou and Taichung and all of Taiwan for the tragic losses suffered as a result of the earthquake of September 21, 1999;

(2) expresses its support for the people of Taiwan as they continue their efforts to rebuild their cities and their lives;

(3) expresses support for disaster assistance being provided by the United States Agency for International Development and other relief agencies; and

(4) recognizes and encourages the important assistance that also could be provided by other nations to alleviate the suffering of the people of Taiwan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 297.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of House Resolution 297, expressing sympathy by the Congress for the victims of the devastating earthquake in Taiwan on September 21.

I thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, for responding expeditiously to the tragic earthquake

in Taiwan by drafting this resolution I am proud to be a cosponsor of.

I personally want to express my deepest sadness about the devastating earthquake that unexpectedly struck Taiwan one week ago and that we convey to the citizens of Taiwan who recently warmly hosted our Congressional delegation during our visit to Taipei our profoundest sympathies about their tragic loss of life and property.

By this resolution, we in the Congress are calling upon the Clinton administration and other members of the international community to do everything possible to assist Taiwan to recover from this unfortunate act of nature.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues in the House to join with us in expressing our deepest sympathies to the people of Taiwan in their time of need and to express our willingness to support them.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me first commend my good friend, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), for introducing this resolution and commend, also, the gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) and all of our other colleagues who have seen fit to join us in cosponsoring this legislation.

I rise in strong support of the resolution. This resolution properly expresses the deepest sympathies of this body to the citizens of Taiwan for the tragic losses suffered as a result of the earthquake of September 21.

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The devastation caused by this earthquake on Taiwan is unspeakable. And as one, Mr. Speaker, who represents San Francisco in this body, I want to remind my colleagues that the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, which is remembered even a century after it occurred, resulted in a number of deaths directly attributable to the earthquake. That is about the same number that the people of Taiwan suffered during the course of the last week.

There are about 8,000 Taiwanese who are injured and well over 2,000 who lost their lives. There are 100,000 Taiwanese citizens, 1 percent of the population of Taiwan, who are homeless, and thousands and thousands of buildings are in ruin. Throughout all this tragedy, Mr. Speaker, the people of Taiwan have shown tremendous strength and courage and determination. We were delighted, all of us, to see over the weekend that two young men were pulled alive from a collapsed building 5 days after the tragedy.

Our resolution expresses support for the disaster assistance which is being provided by our government and specifically for the urban search and rescue teams from Virginia and Florida.

Now, Taiwan is a model of what used to be a developing nation. Not many years ago, Mr. Speaker, Taiwan was economically destitute and a political dictatorship. Taiwan today is one of the most highly developed economies on the face of this planet and is a political democracy. This is truly our dream for all developing nations. And I think this incredible achievement, which was brought about by the hard work of the people of Taiwan, should make us profoundly sympathetic to their current crisis.

They are not asking for financial assistance. Taiwan is a wealthy country. But I want to call on all of my fellow citizens on a voluntary basis to make a contribution to the needs of the tens of thousands of Taiwanese families who have lost everything in this disaster. It was my pleasure yesterday to welcome to my office the distinguished ambassador of Taiwan and to give him my check for \$1,000 as my contribution to help alleviate the pain and suffering which permeates that small country.

I found it remarkable, Mr. Speaker, that even in this moment of Taiwan's tragedy, the government in Beijing insisted that all assistance to Taiwan be directed through China and be approved by China in Beijing. That, of course, clearly is not what is happening. We have provided our aid and assistance, private and public, directly to the free people of Taiwan, and we intend to continue to do so in the coming weeks.

This tragedy underscores our determination to see to it that Taiwan assumes its proper role in various international organizations, and the people of Taiwan should rest assured that the American people stand with them as they have built a viable democratic society and as they are now undergoing the impact of a major natural disaster.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LANTOS. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. GILMAN. First of all I want to compliment the gentleman for his humanitarian effort on behalf of Taiwan. When the gentleman said that all assistance had to go through Beijing, I read in I think today's wire service that indicated that even the Red Cross had to appeal to Beijing before they could go into Taiwan. If that is the case, of course, that is abominable. We would hope that that would be straightened out. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. LANTOS. I thank my friend for his contribution and underscore the absurdity of the unrealistic demands of the government of Beijing. The Red Cross, the International Red Cross, should be able to help the people of Taiwan without going through the phony process of applying to Beijing to provide aid to the suffering people of that island.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from San Dimas, California (Mr. DREIER), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Rules.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. I would like to commend my colleagues the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and others who have worked on this. Obviously as a Californian, the gentleman from California and I know full well of the devastation of earthquakes. His area suffered the Loma Prieta quake in 1989. I remember that day very well, October 16, 1989. We on January 17 of 1994 suffered the terrible Northridge quake in southern California. The gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) is from northern California, I am from southern California. Obviously we in our State have many Chinese Americans, people who are both from the mainland and from Taiwan. So I just would like to say especially as a Californian that my heart goes out to those who have been impacted, of course, the families of those who were killed and also to those who, we are happy to say, have survived.

I just heard as I entered the Chamber the gentleman from California refer to the incredible and heroic mission that was embarked upon by several of those seeking to rescue the people where they found two young men who after several days were still alive. I would just like to say that it is important for us to do everything that we can to encourage private support that will be going through organizations directly to the people. I am frankly happy that we have seen an indication of support coming from the People's Republic of China to provide assistance and that statement I know was made by Jiang Zemin at the very outset immediately following the quake.

I just want to do everything that we possibly can to assist the people of Taiwan as they go through what obviously is a very challenging time. One of the things that again the gentleman from California and I know very well is that it is one thing to go through the quake itself but the rebuilding process itself is a real challenge. It is going to be important for us to continue to provide whatever assistance we possibly can.

I again thank both of my colleagues for authoring this important resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to my good friend, the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ).

(Mr. ORTIZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution expressing sympathy for the victims of the earth-

quake in Taiwan. I would like to echo what has been said by my good friends the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER).

I have a great many friends and acquaintances in Taiwan, having traveled there often on trade missions to seek jobs for my south Texas district. I was there just last month on such a mission. I appreciate those countries who have offered emergency aid to Taiwan in the aftermath of this earthquake. Taiwan is an emerging democracy on the Pacific Rim, and they are a valuable and important player in our international global economy. Taiwan has been enormously forthcoming and helpful when there has been similar natural disasters and emergencies in other countries. It is appropriate and honorable for those countries to return that favor to Taiwan now in Taiwan's hour of need.

The American people and people of all faiths are praying today for the victims and the country as well as the rescuers who are working very, very hard. We are waiting to hear from Taiwan what their specific needs are in the aftermath of this earthquake.

I hope that what my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) has requested is that those of us that can contribute, to make contributions to the government of Taiwan so that they can help the local people who are in dire need.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), the distinguished chairman of our Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support, of course, of H. Res. 297, a resolution addressing the devastating earthquake that occurred last week in Taiwan and literally decimated major parts of the island. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. It has become an all too familiar sight: many thousands of casualties, an unknown number missing, hundreds of thousands of homeless, buildings collapsed, roads destroyed, village-destroying mud slides, dams cracked and in danger of failing. The people of Taiwan will no doubt persevere. They are strong and they are courageous. They have faced adversity before. But it is only appropriate that this body comment on this tragic natural catastrophe and pledge our concern and empathy and assistance.

This does extend the sympathy of the House of Representatives and the American people to the people of Taiwan. It notes with approval the assistance being provided under the auspices of the Agency for International Development. Within a few hours of the earthquake, U.S. rescue teams from Fairfax County, Virginia, and Miami, Florida, for example—I am sure there are many others—were en route to provide assistance. I noticed last night the

people returning to Dulles Airport met by families and friends, and the Taiwanese-American community was out there to greet them at Dulles, thanking them for their special assistance. These teams have had dogs trained to discover those trapped in buildings that had collapsed and these teams quickly attacked the rubble. Such assistance, I think, sends an important message of moral support for people in the midst of suffering and the executive branch should be commended for their prompt action.

The resolution also notes with approval the willingness of other countries to come to the assistance of Taiwan in its time of need. Japan, Singapore, the People's Republic of China, and I want to emphasize Turkey, which recently also experienced its own very similar catastrophe. Even if such aid is modest, and I hope it will be more than modest, it tells the people of Taiwan that they are not alone.

Mr. Speaker, this is a genuinely bipartisan expression of concern. This Member is joined in cosponsoring, for example, by the chairman of the committee, the distinguished gentleman from New York; the ranking Democrat, the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut; and the distinguished ranking Democrat of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific who helped with the crafting and moving of this legislation, the gentleman from California. The list of cosponsors, of course, goes on, and every one, I think, of our colleagues if they knew about the movement of this legislation would like to be there as a cosponsor. I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY).

(Mr. CROWLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 297, a resolution expressing sympathy for the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck Taiwan on September 21 of this year. On that date, Mr. Speaker, an earthquake registering 7.6 on the Richter scale hit the Nantou and Taichung counties of Taiwan. Thousands were killed and even more were left homeless.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of representing Flushing-Queens, New York. Many of my constituents have family and friends living in Taiwan. The prayers and thoughts of my constituents and myself are with the Taiwanese people at this time.

The United States Agency for International Development has responded to Taiwan's call for international assistance by sending technical experts from their office of foreign disaster assistance and the Fairfax, Virginia search and rescue team. I would like to thank these brave men and women who participated in this international rescue operation as well as the other nations which lent their assistance.

Although the earthquake crippled Taiwan's infrastructure in the hardest hit areas where phone, power and water lines were knocked out, I have confidence that Taiwan will be able to rebuild quickly and continue to play an important role in the Asian and world economies.

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Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the House Committee on International Relations, I stand ready to assist Taiwan with its rebuilding efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this worthy resolution to express the House's sympathy for this terrible, terrible disaster.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. COX), chairman of our Republican Policy Committee.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

I think all of us here in this chamber and, in fact, anyone in the world with a television set watched in awe and horror and ultimately relief as 6 year-old boy whose faint cries were heard beneath the rubble was extracted alive after several days following the earthquake. His first words were: Why am I here, and where is my family? But his parents and his sisters were all killed in that same building in that same earthquake. It tore my heart out.

Mr. Speaker, I have a 6 year-old son, and just to imagine the human loss, the tragedy of that earthquake, is almost beyond our individual capacities.

Sometimes it takes an enormous tragedy such as this earthquake to bring home how futile it is for us to maintain the political differences that we do across the globe. I think everyone watching on television saw that the people of Taiwan are not the dangerous splitists so often derided by the Communist government in Beijing, but men and women and children fighting for a better life, just like all of us.

Mr. Speaker, that is why it is so tragically ironic that at this time, when we should have set aside politics and put humanitarian interests first, the government of Beijing literally got in the way as Russian aid was trying to make its way immediately after the tragedy to the victims. A Russian plane actually had to divert and take a different, longer route in order to get to Taiwan because they did not have clearance from the Beijing government. The American Red Cross, as has been discussed previously in this debate, felt it necessary, even though it is a non-governmental organization based here, to check first with Beijing, and that slowed down aid getting to people right when they most needed it, when there is still a chance to save their lives. This should never happen again.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), our Democratic colleague, has offered legislation that I know the Chairman of the Committee on International Relations supports that would

permit Taiwan membership in the World Health Organization, something that does not require the status of statehood; so, this does not in any way interfere with our United States China policy. But what it would do, Mr. Speaker, is cut out the bureaucracy so that in the case of future medical emergencies this could not happen again, these kinds of delays could not happen again.

I think we also need legislation to make sure that every nongovernmental organization in America, every charity in America understands that if there ever is another medical emergency or natural disaster in Taiwan, that they can get relief there right away without having to check with Beijing first.

It is fortunate that so much good is now coming of the worldwide attention that has been paid to this tragedy in Taiwan, so much money is coming from our country to help people there. On Saturday night last, I met with several hundred Taiwanese Americans who were gathered in principle part to marshal their efforts behind earthquake relief in Taiwan, and I personally am participating in those efforts, and I hope that everyone here will because we do live in a small world, and we do all have much more in common than we realize.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD), my good friend and distinguished colleague.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding me the time, and for the reasons that have been outlined already by many of the previous speakers, I stand in strong support of Resolution 297 expressing our sympathy and our concern for the people of Taiwan. As a representative of an area that is the closest U.S. area to Taiwan, we certainly have many important business, commercial and people-to-people relationships with the people of Taiwan, and the people of Taiwan have always been there for Guam and other parts of the United States whenever we have problems. And so it is important that we express directly and in this very highly symbolic and very important way our sympathy for them. In our own relationships and between Guam and Taiwan, whenever we had a very severe earthquake, about 4 years ago, and we have had a number of typhoons where the people of Taiwan have always come through. And I am pleased to report that back home in Guam we are also engaged in many relief efforts to help the local Chinese community in their efforts to gather support and provide needed assistance to the people of Taiwan.

We have also experienced some of the obstacles that have been alluded to earlier, and it is simply abominable that political considerations are now confounding and have confounded and have found their way into efforts to provide relief. And yet in a kind of interesting way, I think the earthquake

in Taiwan has pointed out the real success story that is Taiwan, the fact that they do have very good and solid relationships with people throughout the world who want to provide them their needed assistance. Nothing is as a serious sign of our common humanity than when we are most vulnerable, and certainly times of natural disaster point that out. And it is very important that we continue to express our support for Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to personally participate in this.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H. Res. 297, a resolution expressing sympathy for the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck Taiwan on September 21, 1999, I would like to express my strong support for this important legislation. Had I been able to be in Washington today, I would have enthusiastically cast my vote in the affirmative.

As the first member of the U.S. House of Representatives born on Taiwan, I would first like to express my deepest sympathy and condolences to the people of Taiwan. I hope in these challenging times that they find comfort in family and loved ones.

Since the earthquake shook Nantou and Taichung, Taiwan, thousands of homes and families were damaged or destroyed. Thousands of individuals lay dead, missing, and injured. I feel a great sense of sadness for all that were affected by this tragic incident.

I commend the Taiwanese people for their display of strength, courage, and determination. Indeed, the tasks of rebuilding homes and comforting loved ones lay dauntingly ahead. I am confident that my colleagues, the President, and the international community will provide the necessary assistance to help the people of Taiwan rebuild their homes and family.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 297, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

DESIRE OF HOUSE REGARDING BUDGET SURPLUS AND RETIRING THE PUBLIC DEBT

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 306) expressing the desire of the House of Representatives to not spend any of the budget surplus created by social security receipts and to continue to retire the debt held by the public.